



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Office of Environmental Affairs
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February 4, 1991

Mr. Don White, Chief
Field Operations Branch (H-8)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. White,

This letter summarizes our meeting in your office between representatives of our respective agencies on January 30, 1991.

During our meeting we reiterated our need to exercise our responsibility for resources held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the Navajo Nation and individual allottees. Additionally, our trusteeship for natural resources under CERCLA requires substantial coordination and our active participation in development of any documentation leading to an informed decision.

We discussed with you our desire to specifically improve the coordination and communication between EPA and this Department in implementing hazardous waste programs on Navajo Reservation and allotted Navajo Indian lands. We also recognize this involves the Navajo Nation, and other Federal agencies (i.e., IHS, ATSDR).

We had suggested initiating this cooperative effort by hosting a meeting of appropriate agencies on March 28, 1991 in Albuquerque. As we discussed, we expected the thrust of this initial meeting to 1) help clarify the roles and responsibilities of concerned Federal and Tribal offices in systematically identifying potential hazardous sites that may require emergency and/or remedial action and in appropriate situations determining responsible parties and 2) addressing immediate issues such as uranium mining areas including Navajo-Brown Vandever and Navajo Desiderio and abandoned livestock dip vats. In accordance with your request we will temporarily postpone finalizing this meeting date until the results of testing are available later this month.

As we both agree, we consider clarifying and improving interagency coordination as an important step in helping make the hazmat program work smoothly on Navajo Indian lands. We will be

pleased to host this meeting and make the necessary arrangements in developing an agenda in cooperation with your office, the Tribe and other appropriate Federal agencies.

We look forward to working with your staff on these important issues of mutual concern and responsibility.

Sincerely,


for Patricia Sanderson Port
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: Area Director, BIA, Navajo Area, Window Rock, AZ
Field Solicitor, DOI, Window Rock, AZ
Chief, Hazardous Waste Management, DOI/OEA/DC
Regional Environmental Officer, Albuquerque
Regional Environmental Officer, Denver